STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

CONNECTICUT GROWN

Steven K. Reviczky
Commissioner

Tel: (860) 713-2500
Fax: (860) 713-2514

Testimony presented to the Environment Committee of

The Connecticut General Assembly

By the Connecticut Department of Agriculture

February 11, 2013

H.B. 6314 – AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN REVISIONS TO THE COMMUNITY FARMS PROGRAM

Chairmen Meyer and Gentile, Vice Chairs Maynard and Albis, Ranking Members Chapin and Shaban and members of the Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

The Department of Agriculture considers this a technical change to the statute meant to bring the newer Community Farms Program into conformity with the original Farmland Preservation Program.

The main program was created in 1978 and was codified in CGS Section 22-26cc. The statute specifically allows for the purchase of the owner's right to build a residence and/or farm structures on the restricted property, defines the sole release provision for our easements, allows for joint municipal and state purchases of development rights, and authorizes the Commissioner of Agriculture to require conservation plans for our farms, along with other provisions.

The Community Farms Program was codified in CGS Section 22-26nn in 2008. Even though it is in the same chapter of the statutes as the main program, the Community Farms Program statute does not include the same specific authorities that are spelled out for the Farmland Preservation Program.

In order for the department to work both programs efficiently and smoothly, and to work effectively with municipal partners, the language of each program should mirror the other as closely as possible. The Department of Agriculture respectfully requests the change.

After reviewing the language before the committee, the department believes that a modification in Lines 88 and 89 are in order. The department recommends removing the phrase "...provided

joint ownership by such municipality shall be limited to land within its boundaries." This will serve to delete the same language that we are requesting be deleted in the main PDR statutory language, so municipalities may purchase easements that cross their town's border.

Thank you for your time today and for your thoughtful consideration of this testimony. Please let us know if we can provide any additional information that would be helpful.